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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/720,998	05/21/2001	Markku Asumalahti	5848.161USW1	8394
23552	7590	04/05/2004	EXAMINER	
MERCHANT & GOULD PC P.O. BOX 2903 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903			HARLAN, ROBERT D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1713	

DATE MAILED: 04/05/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/720,998

Applicant(s)

ASUMALAHTI ET AL.

Examiner

Robert D. Harlan

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 January 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

1. The Amendment and Petition for Time Extension filed by Applicant on 01/21/04 have been entered.

Response to Amendment/Arguments

2. Applicant's amendment and arguments filed on 01/21/04 have been fully considered and they are found unpersuasive.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in-

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effect under this subsection of a national application published under section 122(b) only if the international application designating the United States was published under Article 21(2)(a) of such treaty in the English language; or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that a patent shall not be deemed filed in the United States for the purposes of this subsection based on the filing of an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a).

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-17 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Ahvenainen et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,326,835 (hereinafter "Ahvenainen").

6. Claims 1-17 remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Barry et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,403,181 (hereinafter "Barry").

7. Ahvenainen teaches a multi-stage process for producing polyethylene having a bimodal and/or broad molecular weight distribution in the presence of an ethylene polymerizing catalyst system in a multi-step reaction sequence. See Ahvenainen, Abstract; col. 1, lines 6-9. Ahvenainen further

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teaches a multi-stage process in which a slurry-gas phase process is used and the stages involved loop reactors followed by gas reactors. See Ahvenainen, col. 1, lines 62-65; col. 2, line 61 through col. 3, line 7. Ahvenainen further teaches the use of Ziegler-Natta catalyst in the polymerization process. See Ahvenainen, col. 3, lines 25-34. Ahvenainen further teaches the use of alpha olefin comonomers. See Ahvenainen, col. 4, lines 62-66. Ahvenainen further teaches an end product that has a density, melt flow and dispersity within the ranges of the claims compositions and pipes. See Ahvenainen, Example 6. Ahvenainen also teaches the use of polyethylene in the production of pipes. See Ahvenainen, Examples. Although Ahvenainen does not disclose all the characteristics and properties of the compositions and pipes disclosed in the present claims, based on the substantially identical process and the properties disclosed by Ahvenainen, the Examiner has a reasonable basis to believe that the properties claimed in the present invention is inherent in the compositions and pipes disclosed by Ahvenainen. Because the PTO has no means to conduct analytical experiments, the burden of proof is shifted to the Applicants to prove that the properties are not inherent. See In re Fitzgerald, 619 F.2d 67, 205 USPQ 594 (CCPA 1980); In re

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Best, 195 USPQ 430 (CCPA 1977); In re Napier, 55 F.3d 610, 613, 34 USPQ2d 1782, 1784 (Fed. Cir. 1995).

8. Barry teaches high performance conduits, the polyethylene resin used to make them and the resins exhibits a bimodal molecular weight distribution or broad molecular weight distribution and is of high molecular weight. See Barry, Abstract; col. 1, lines 19-53. Barry further teaches polyethylene resins with properties (density, comonomer selection, melt flow, etc.) that are within the ranges of present claims. Although Barry does not disclose all the characteristics and properties of the compositions and pipes disclosed in the present claims, based on the substantially identical process and the properties disclosed by Barry, the Examiner has a reasonable basis to believe that the properties claimed in the present invention is inherent in the compositions and pipes disclosed by Barry. Because the PTO has no means to conduct analytical experiments, the burden of proof is shifted to the Applicants to prove that the properties are not inherent. See In re Fitzgerald, 619 F.2d 67, 205 USPQ 594 (CCPA 1980); In re Best, 195 USPQ 430 (CCPA 1977); In re Napier, 55 F.3d 610, 613, 34 USPQ2d 1782, 1784 (Fed. Cir. 1995).

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9. The claiming of a new use, new function or unknown property which is inherently present in the prior art does not necessarily make the claim patentable. In re Best, 562 F.2d 1252, 1254, 195 USPQ 430, 433 (CCPA 1977). However, the fact that a certain result or characteristic may occur or be present in the prior art is not sufficient to establish the inherency of that result or characteristic. See In re Rijckaert, 9 F.3d. 1531, 1534, 28 USPQ2d 1955, 1957 (Fed. Cir. 1993) (reversed rejection because inherency was based on what would result due to optimization of conditions, not what was necessary due to optimization of conditions, not what was necessarily present in the prior art). "To establish inherency, the extrinsic evidence must make clear that the missing descriptive matter is necessarily present in the thing described in the reference, and that it would be so recognized by persons of ordinary skill. Inherency, however, may not be established by probabilities or possibilities. The mere fact that a certain thing may result from a given set of circumstances is not sufficient." See In re Robertson, 169 F.3d 743, 745, 49 USPQ2d 1949, 1950-51. "In relying upon the theory of inherency, the examiner must provide a basis in fact and/or technical reasoning to reasonably support the

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determination that the allegedly inherent characteristic necessarily flows from the teachings of the applied prior art."

Ex parte Levy, 17 USPQ2d 1461, 1464 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1990).

10. The Examiner reasons that if a polymer composition is prepared by a known process, then the polymer composition itself and its properties are known as well. The Examiner finds nothing in the disclosure of Ahvenainen or Barry that would suggest that the properties of the ethylene polymer resins are different from the properties of the claimed compositions and pipes.

11. Even if the disclosure of Ahvenainen or Barry does not satisfy the requirements of 35 USC 102(b or e), it still would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the claimed ethylene polymers and pipes, because it appears that the claimed ethylene polymers and pipes are within the generic disclosure of Ahvenainen or Barry and a person of ordinary skill in the art would have expected all embodiment of Ahvenainen or Barry to have similar properties. Furthermore, ethylene homopolymers have many uses, including as molded

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articles, that are known to persons of ordinary skill in the art. Applicant has not demonstrated that the differences, if any, between the claimed ethylene polymers and pipes disclosed by Ahvenainen or Barry give rise to unexpected results. The evidence presented to rebut the prima facie case of obviousness must be commensurate in scope with the claims to which it pertains. See In re Dill and Scales, 202 USPQ 805 (CCPA 1979).

12. The Applicant argues that the number of reactors, catalyst and reactor conditions of the present invention are different from what is taught in Ahvenainen or Barry. The Examiner contends that the present claims are examined in the broadest light possible and the distinction that Applicants point out are not part of the claimed language. Thus claims 1-17 remain unpatentable over Ahvenainen or Barry.

Conclusion

13. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

14. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this

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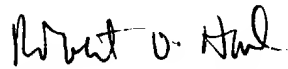
action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert D. Harlan whose telephone number is (571) 272-1102. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri, 10 AM - 8 PM.

16. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David W. Wu can be reached on (571) 273-1114. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9306 for regular communications and (703) 872-9306 for After Final communications.

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17. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1495.


Robert D. Harlan
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1713

rdh
March 31, 2004